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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 VILNIUS 001288

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB AND INL
JUSTICE FOR OIA, AFMLS, AND NDDS
TREASURY FOR FINCEN
DEA FOR OILS AND OFFICE OF DIVERSION CONTROL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SNAR PREL LH
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA: 2005 INSCR NARCOTICS AND CHEMICAL
CONTROL SECTION

REF: SECSTATE 209561

Lithuania

I. Summary

In 2005, Lithuania increased the efficiency of law enforcement counternarcotics efforts, improved drug-consumption research capabilities, and strengthened implementation of the National Drug Addiction Prevention and Drug Control Program at the federal and municipal levels. Lithuania remains a transit route for heroin and other illicit drugs from Asia and Russia to Western Europe and produces synthetic narcotics for both domestic use and export. The most popular drugs for domestic consumption include synthetic narcotics, poppy straw extract, heroin, and cannabis. Lithuania's domestic drug trade is at least LTL 500 million (USD 172 million) and growing. The number of registered drug addicts and drug-related crimes increased in 2005. Law enforcement cooperation between the U.S. Government and the Government of Lithuania is very good. Lithuania is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

Synthetic narcotics, poppy straw extract, heroin, and cannabis are the most popular illicit drugs in Lithuania. Heroin is smuggled into Lithuania from Central Asia and the Balkans. Cocaine imports from South America transit Western Europe into Lithuania and then on to neighboring countries. Law enforcement authorities estimate that the domestic drug trade is over LTL 500 million (USD 172 million) per annum and growing. Organized crime groups operating in central and western Lithuania smuggle illegal narcotics and psychotropics, especially ecstasy, into other Western European countries, including Norway, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

The number of people seeking initial treatment for drug addiction increased from 10.3 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003 to 12.2 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004. Nearly 73 percent of registered drug addicts are younger than 35 years old, 90 percent live in cities, and 20 percent are women. Lithuania had 943 registered cases of HIV in October 2005, an increase of 133 from October 2004. Approximately eighty percent of those registered with HIV contracted the disease through intravenous drug use.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2005

Policy Initiatives. Lithuania approved a Drug Prevention Action Plan for 2006 under the overall National Drug Addiction Prevention and Drug Control Program which the Government adopted in 2004. In 2005, the parliament designated this program as critical to Lithuania's long-term national security. Under the auspices of the program, 54 municipalities (out of 60) established local drug control commissions and approved local programs.

The national Narcotics Control Department (NCD), established in 2004, commissioned its first survey of drug use in Lithuania. The study found that 8.2 percent of Lithuania's residents had used drugs at least once in their lifetime, with those 15-34 years old significantly more likely than those 35-64 years old to have tried drugs at least once (14.1 percent and 3.8 percent respectively.) The NCD, in cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers, also initiated a drug prevention and education project targeted at reducing the sale and use of illicit narcotics in bars and clubs.

Accomplishments. In 2005, Lithuania increased funding to the National Drug Prevention and Control Program by twenty percent, from LTL 10.2 million (USD 3.51 million) to LTL 12.2 million (USD 4.21 million) and allocated LTL 15.25 million (USD 5.25 million) to the 2006 Action Plan. The national police department strengthened prevention and control measures at public events including concerts and holiday celebrations, arresting several individuals for selling illicit drugs. In 2005, the police also organized a "Drug

Prevention Week" for about 600 school children from around the country.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Lithuanian law enforcement registered 1,313 drug-related crimes as of November 2005, a slight increase over the 1,290 registered during the same period in 2004. In 2004, Lithuanian law enforcement detained 869 persons for criminal acts related to the possession or sale of narcotic and psychotropic substances. In the first ten months of 2005, law enforcement detained 845 persons. As of November 2005, police and customs had seized 545 kilograms of poppy straw, 76 liters of poppy straw extract, 59 kilograms of cannabis, 48 kilograms of hashish, and 5,500 ecstasy tablets. They also impounded small quantities (less than five kilograms each) of heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines, LSD, hallucinogenic mushrooms, various psychotropic drugs, and precursors.

In 2005, the police shut down a laboratory producing high-quality amphetamines. They confiscated 769 grams of amphetamine and three kilograms of BMK (1-phenyl-2-propanone), an amphetamine and methamphetamine pre-cursor, from the laboratory site. The Customs Service initiated fourteen pre-trial investigations related to narcotics smuggling in 2005.

In May 2005, law enforcement officials on the Latvian border seized 23 kilograms of hashish hidden in a passenger car. Swedish and Lithuanian law enforcement cooperated to stop a drug smuggling group that included five Lithuanians and had attempted to transport 130 kilograms of hashish and 3.5 kilograms of amphetamine from Lithuania to Sweden. Russian and Lithuanian law enforcement officials busted a criminal group that transported heroin and amphetamine to Russia, arresting three individuals and seizing 30 grams of heroine and one kilogram of amphetamine. In October 2005, Norwegian law enforcement detained three Lithuanians for transporting 56 kilograms of rohypnol tablets. In December 2005, Lithuanian police participated in a joint operation with Ireland and France to arrest a Lithuanian arriving in Ireland by car ferry with 113,000 ecstasy pills concealed in his car bumper.

The Lithuanian court system heard 1,111 drug-related cases in 2005, with a 75 percent conviction rate. Those convicted of trafficking or distribution face prison terms of five to eight years.

Corruption. Lithuania does not encourage or facilitate illicit production of controlled substances or money laundering. Lithuania has established a broad legal and institutional anti-corruption framework, but low-level corruption and bribery continues to be the basis of frequent political scandals. There were no reports involving Lithuanian government officials in drug production or sale or in the laundering of drug proceeds.

Cultivation/Production. Illicit laboratories in Lithuania produce amphetamines for both local use and export. Lithuania is not a major cultivator of illicit narcotics, but law enforcement regularly finds and destroys small plots of cannabis and opium poppies used to produce opium straw extract for local consumption. In 2005, police, in cooperation with customs agents, eradicated 10,089 square meters of poppies and 286 square meters of cannabis.

Drug Flow/Transit. Poppy straw is transported through Lithuania to Kaliningrad and Latvia. Marijuana and hashish arrive in Lithuania from the east and the west, by land and sea (e.g., from Morocco). Heroin comes to Lithuania by the Silk Road (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Lithuania) or the Balkan road (via the Balkans and Central or Western Europe). From Lithuania, heroin leaves by ferry or car to Scandinavian countries, Poland, and Kaliningrad. Cocaine arrives in Lithuania from Central and South America via Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Amphetamines arrive from Poland and the Netherlands. Amphetamines from Lithuania are usually transported by truck to Sweden and Norway through Poland, Germany and Denmark. Most ecstasy tablets come by land or sea from the Netherlands. Iceland was a new destination for amphetamines and cocaine in 2005. The United States is occasionally a destination country for synthetic narcotics, primarily ecstasy, from Lithuania.

Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction). Lithuania operates five national drug dependence centers and ten regional public health centers, and attempts to reduce drug consumption through education programs and public outreach, especially in schools. In 2005, twenty rehabilitation centers and seventeen addict rehabilitation communities operated in Lithuania. The Prisons Department operates a rehabilitation center for incarcerated drug addicts, and allocated LTL 780,000 (USD 280,000) in 2005 to purchase equipment and fund activities to prevent drug trafficking, train officials, and educate prison. Treaties and Agreements. Lithuania is a party to the 1988 UN

Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention against Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol. Lithuania also is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against migrant smuggling and trafficking in Women and Children. An extradition treaty and mutual legal assistance treaty are in force between the U.S. and Lithuania. In 2004, Lithuania signed agreements with Belgium to increase law enforcement cooperation and with Turkey to enhance cooperation in fighting terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Bilateral Cooperation. Law enforcement cooperation between the United States and Lithuania is very good. In 2005, the United States continued to support Lithuania's efforts to strengthen its law enforcement bodies and improve border security. To strengthen regional cooperation in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Baltic States and Russia, the United States sponsored a conference in Lithuania on drug prevention and treatment with participation of speakers from the Department of Health and Human Services and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Lithuanian Customs opened negotiations with a U.S.-based logistics company for assistance in narcotics detection and interdiction.

The Road Ahead. The United States looks forward to continuing its close cooperative relationship with Lithuania's law enforcement agencies. In 2006, the United States will continue to promote increased Lithuanian attention to the drug problem and will support activities aimed at preventing the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics. A U.S. priority will be to encourage Lithuania to focus on the role of communities, parents and schools in drug abuse prevention and on strengthening counseling and other services as part of drug treatment programs.

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